

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 26 October 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of France, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

We welcome the invitation to Hagai El-Ad, Director of the Israeli non-governmental organization B'Tselem, to brief the Security Council during the 18 October open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. It was useful that a human rights dimension could be included in our discussions.

The Security Council's discussions are enriched by the invitations extended, the previous week as on many previous occasions, to independent civil society briefers. It is vital that these individuals can contribute to our meetings without facing negative consequences, including personal attacks or insults, either within or outside the Security Council Chamber. Therefore, the remarks made to Mr. El-Ad during the open debate by the Permanent Representative of Israel are deeply regrettable.

Those remarks were delivered in a language for which interpretation is not provided. This constitutes a breach of the procedures of the Council and of the basic rules which are intended to make sure that we understand each other within the Security Council, even when we disagree. It also undermines the point of an open debate. We request the presidency of the Security Council, as well as all incoming presidencies, to ensure that this incident does not set a precedent and that in general all speakers use one of the six official languages of the United Nations. We recall that briefers under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, as well as speakers under rule 37, participate in our meetings at the invitation of the Security Council members.

We kindly request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) François Delattre
Permanent Representative of France

(Signed) Karel van Oosterom
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

(Signed) Olof Skoog
Permanent Representative of Sweden

(Signed) Karen Pierce
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